



BLN Ability Link

BLN – “Taking the ‘dis” out of disABILITIES at work in Wyoming”

March 2010

Cheyenne Business Leadership Network E-newsletter

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BLN Mission Statement

The Cheyenne Business Leadership Network is an employer led initiative dedicated to providing opportunities to build a diverse workforce and customer base that includes persons with disabilities.

Our program goals include developing business leaders who actively promote recruiting and retaining employees and customers with disabilities, and to provide disability awareness to the general public.

2010 Career Fair



for People of All Abilities
**including Veterans, Mature Worker
Students & all Job Seekers!**

Wednesday-April 21, 2010

9:00 am – 12:00 noon

at

LCCC Center for Conferences

(South entrance to LCCC)

2010 Career Fair connects business, community, government, military and educational leaders with veterans, students, people with disabilities, and mature workers to discuss the benefits of inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

• Break-out sessions:

- **“Speed-Mock Interviews”**: 10:00 – 11:00. Practice interviewing with real employers to sharpen your interviewing skills. Get an evaluation on ways to improve and receive constructive feedback.
- **“Dress for Success”**: 10:00 – 10:50, and 11:00 – 11:50. Tips from Connie Rainey from Dillard's on how to dress for the job you want to get, and how to do it on a small budget.
- Bring your résumé to submit to prospective employers
- Network with potential employers for full-time or part-time employment or summer jobs
- Learn about valuable products and services from presenting businesses and organizations
- Win Door Prizes provided by area employers!

For more information or to reserve a booth contact:
Marla Lewis, BLN Director 631-8012 or wbln@vcn.com
“Taking the ‘dis’ out of disABILITIES at work in Wyoming”

Career Fair brought to you in part by the following BLN sponsors:

State of Wyoming - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation • Lowe's DC 965

• Gap West Radio

Cheyenne Light Fuel & Power • Wells Fargo • US Bank • RSI, Inc.

2009-2010 CBLN Sponsors:



Reed Services, Inc



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Gap West Broadcasting
Grant's Farm
Arrow Moving & Storage
Bresnan Com.
University of Phoenix
Dance Spirit Dance Studio



Cheyenne's Disability Friendly Business of the Month

T. J MAXX

Don Prater, General
Manager

Cheyenne's local T. J. Maxx retail clothing store has been recognized for best practices for inclusion of a diverse workforce and for providing accessible shopping to people with disabilities and their families.

Store General Manager, Don Prater, makes it a practice to include employees of all abilities and nationalities in an effort to complete the company-wide initiative to be a company of choice to work for. The store philosophy is to allow each qualified employee to have a job that is mutually beneficial for the store as well as the employee.

Larry, who has been employed as a janitor at the store for over six months, loves to work in an environment that allows him to become a productive employee, and takes pride in keeping his store clean and presentable for all customers.

Thanks to T.J. Maxx and manager Don Prater for supporting the disability community of Cheyenne!



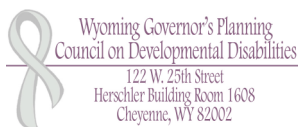
If you know of a business or organization, which you consider Disability Friendly, we would like to hear about it. Please contact Marla Lewis, BLN Director at 631-8012 or wbln@vcn.com with a Disability Friendly Business nomination.

BLN Community Calendar

- April 6: ADT Class Career Exploration Day
- April 8: Festival of Trees Appreciation Dinner. Call for details: 631-8012
- April 13: ADT MentorAbility - City Transit Program Tour
- April 14 : City Hall, Rm. 120 – 11:30 -Mayor's Council for People with Disabilities
- April 16: BLN Steering Committee Meeting, Chey. Depot Bd. Room, 11:30-1:00
- April 17: "Jump into Jewels", Habitat for Humanity fund raiser
- April 21: BLN Spring Career Fair, LCCC Center for Conferences, 9am - Noon.
- April – May: East High MentorAbility Mentoring Days
- April 30: Rock Spring BLN Chef's Challenge, Call 307-362-3339
- May 13: East High MentorAbility Graduation
- May 21: BLN Steering Committee Meeting, Chey. Depot Bd. Room, 11:30-1:00



Frontier Access & Mobility
US Naval Reserve
Home Depot
Wal-Mart Dist. Center



RBC Wealth Management

1 Properties

Riemann Corporation



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WYD/STEP, INC.



State Farm -Tom
Segrave

2010 ROCK'n RIVER CHEF CHALLENGE INVITATION

Friday, April 30, 2010

Sweetwater County Events Complex
3320 Yellowstone Road
Rock Springs, WY 82901



BECOME A FEATURED CHEF

The heart and soul of the 2010 Chefs Challenge are the dedicated and creative culinary talents of both amateur and professional chefs who participate! Be a part of the action by volunteering to be a featured chef at this 4th annual special event.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Anyone interested in sharing their culinary talents are invited to participate. You can represent your business as its sponsored chef (great marketing opportunity), or you can participate as an individual in either the Professional or Amateur categories! Think about organizing family, friends, church groups, or co-workers to join you in creating your dish.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

Whether a fun activity or an opportunity to compete – the 4th annual ROCK'n RIVER Chefs Challenge will be a wonderful way to showcase your culinary talents. In addition, you will be supporting a worthy cause: promoting employment opportunities for people with disabilities through the Business Leadership Network and MentorABILITY programs. Chefs can use this as a marketing opportunity for their business by use of decorations, coupons, and advertising material at their table.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Beth Whitman (307) 362-3339
P.O. Box 1243, Rock Springs, WY 82902

RS-BLN@vcn.com

www.RS-BLN.com

MENU CATEGORIES

Five categories will be featured – chefs are invited to select from the following:

1. ***Appetizers***
2. ***Main Entrées***
3. ***International Cuisine***
4. ***Desserts***
5. ***Food Stylizing***

Register for either Amateur or Professional Division
Register for either Amateur or Professional Division
Register for either Amateur or Professional Division
Register for either amateur or Professional Division
Only 1 Division- this will be judged for presentation

HOW TO REGISTER

You may register in a variety of ways. If you have access to the internet, you are invited to register on-line at www.RS-BLN.com look for the tab on the left that says Chefs Challenge and click (Chef Registration is at top of page).

You may also e-mail your registration to: RS-BLN@vcn.com . Or you may complete the registration form and send to P.O. Box 1243, Rock Springs, WY 82902 Attention: Beth Whitman. If you need help, please call Beth at (307) 362-3339.

VISIT BLN WEBSITES:
Cheyenne-bln.com

www.WY-BLN.com

www.USBLN.com

Contact CBLN director:

Marla Lewis
2101 O'Neal Ave.
Cheyenne, WY
82009

Phone:
(307) 631-8012

E-mail:
WBLN@vcn.com

Valuable Links:

<http://www.cheyennechamber.org/>

<http://www.cheyennecity.org/>
www.ctat-training.com

www.dol.gov/odep

Job Accommodation
Network (JAN)

<http://WWW.eSight.org>

www.eeoc.gov

www.murane.com

<http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/>
disabilityinfo.gov

Seven Habits of the Smart and Savvy Job Seeker



There are many factors leading to success in the job search, not the least of which are qualities or attitudes which are most likely to serve you best during a difficult time of transition, like resilience, persistence, and the willingness to take initiative. Here are seven habits for you to consider exercising in the course of your job search which would put you in the category of being both smart and savvy as a job seeker, and with a bit of luck, in the growing ranks of the newly employed!

1. The willingness to apply where you want to work, regardless of their hiring status.

Many job seekers unnecessarily limit their job search options by targeting only those employers who they know are hiring or are actively recruiting. This is foolhardy for a couple of reasons. First, during the time when a company is actively advertising openings, you are can be sure that your resume or application will be one of many, thus being given more of a "screening glance" rather than a "selective" one. Secondly, you want to be considered for employment not only the day that you apply, but also a week later, two weeks later, one or even many months later. Your objective in applying may be to introduce yourself as a potential top contender *before* there is an opening, so that when an opportunity does arise, they will think of you first!

Here's some important advice: When you hear an employer say, "We're not hiring", remember that they what they are saying is that they are not hiring *now* – but that doesn't mean they won't be hiring tomorrow, next week, or next month! In your own mind, when you hear "we're not hiring", just add the word, "*yet*", knowing that it's all a matter of time when they will be actively recruiting someone again!

- Is your job search well-balanced in terms of the number of employers you are applying to who are actively recruiting new employees and those who you have purposely targeted whether or not they are presently hiring? How comfortable are you approaching an employer who isn't currently hiring?

2. The willingness to apply for jobs for which you may be "under" or "over" qualified!

You have nothing to lose and only to gain by applying for *any* job which you believe you can successfully perform and will benefit you in equal measure. If you feel you may be under-qualified, remember that many employers raise the minimum qualifications just as a way of reduce the number of applicants. Be ready to express what you have to bring to the job, what you may even add to the position if you were hired. If nothing else, your assertiveness and confidence will win you points. Even if they do not hire you for the job they are advertising for, they may consider you for an alternate position. If you feel you may be over-qualified, you still have nothing to lose by applying, and you can always work to upgrade the position so that is more in sync with your abilities! Plus, once they have met you, employers may consider you for other positions which may arise, and for positions that come up within the network of their own connections, both personal and professional.

- Have you resisted applying for jobs in places you would like to work for fear that you would be might be under or over-qualified? What do you have to lose by putting your best foot forward?

3. The willingness to continually expand your number of prospective employers!

Monogamy is a lovely thing in a relationship, but it should not be a primary value for the job seeker in relation to potential employers! The more the merrier! Once hired, you can be the icon of loyalty, but until then, keep your options open. Except for limitations of time and energy, there is no limit to the number of employers that you can be applying with at any given time. Don't limit your possibilities – expand your horizons! Target those you know you are interested in, and target those that you *may* be interested in! Remember that you have the freedom to say

“no” to any employer who responds, so there's no danger of having too many interviews or too many offers.

- Have you unnecessarily limited your possibilities by limiting the number of employers you are in contact with? Who can you add to your list of prospective employers this week?

4. Being prepared to be interviewed by anyone, at any time!

You never know who you will meet when approaching a business, or what will actually serve as an interview. Many small employers like to interview applicants informally at the time they come in to apply, although it may feel more like a conversation or part of a pre-screening process. Don't approach an employer you are not ready to interview with right then and there! That means looking professional, having your job search tools available, and being ready to play your A game at a moment's notice. It also means engaging whoever you meet as if they were the person hiring, because you never know what pull another employee might have in the hiring process. Treat everyone you meet as a potential employer or co-worker! If no one offers to interview you, ask to talk to the manager or supervisor for a few minutes, initiating your own on-the-spot interview, even if it only consists of two or three quick questions. Be certain to follow up the spontaneous interview with a note, a phone call, or a scheduled visit.

5. The willingness to employ a variety of job search methods!

One of the most common errors made by discouraged job seekers is to lean on a few job search methods to the exclusion of all others. Smart and savvy job seekers increase their effectiveness by increasing the number of methods they employ! Here is a quick list of twelve strategies that can be used to get your foot in the door of prospective employers:

- a. Mailing resumes with a cover letter tailored to each employer, followed up with a phone call to set up an interview;
 - b. Walking in the door of employers, introducing yourself and applying in person;
 - c. Calling businesses on the telephone and setting up informational interviews in order to meet with and learn from someone inside the company, using the information gathered to plan the next step;
 - d. Responding to ads in the newspaper, on online bulletin boards, in journals or magazines, or on the Web;
 - e. Making an employment proposal to businesses in order to create an opportunity by matching your skills to an employer's unidentified need;
 - f. Talking to people you know in order to make connections with people they may know who might be able to assist you in your job search in some way;
 - g. Participating in job fairs and other community or business-related events in order to meet and connect with prospective employers in your field;
 - h. Taking advantage of employment services and outside resources in the community;
 - i. Utilizing private employment agencies and or executive search firms;
 - j. Initiating a project which would put you in direct contact with people in your field; (e.g., make a video, carry out interviews for an article, put together a resource guide, plan a community event, etc.)
 - k. Engaging in volunteer, work experience, and/or internship opportunities with prospective employers.
- Which of these methods have you used to the point of being most comfortable with?

Which of these methods would you consider adding to your repertoire? Which one will you put into use this very week?

6. Treating the job search as a multi-layered communication process requiring ongoing contact, an upbeat attitude, and definite goals for interacting with prospective employers.

Looking for work is a complex process which can include various kinds of written correspondence, in-person introductions, telephone interactions, electronic communication, completing copious forms and jumping through various bureaucratic hoops, keeping a calendar of daily and weekly efforts, and following up on all agreements. It is perhaps best described as an ongoing process of engagement using all possible modes of communication. Everyone leans toward the mode they are most comfortable with and works best for them, but no job seeker will be immune from having to utilize most of these various forms of communication in order to maximize their opportunities with prospective employers.

The smart and savvy job seeker relies on a combination of strategies, not getting bogged down in, or restricting yourself to, a single mode. Consider how you might strategize with your list of targeted employers. For example, let's say you have a list of a dozen employers – you may begin by dropping in on one of them, networking through other people with two of them, initiating an informational interview with three of them, proceed with a targeted mailing for a few them, and deliver an employment proposal to the remaining three. Depending on the results of those initial efforts, you will then have a variety of ways of following up, knowing that the successful job search is seldom the result of a one-shot approach to employers.

- How would you rate your ability to maintain ongoing contact with prospective employers?

7. The willingness to be the squeaky wheel!

You know how they say, "It's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease"? Well, it's usually the squeaky applicant that gets the job! Waiting for an employer to make the next move is one of the most common mistakes made by job seekers, giving up completely if they don't hear back within a short time. Pardon the metaphor for those who don't fish, but this is like throwing your line into the water, putting your fishing rod down and waiting for the fish to jump into the boat. The smart and savvy job seeker learns how to cast, monitor the tension on the line, and change bait when necessary. They don't give up on that fishing hole until they have made every effort to get a strike.

The ability to stick with something until you succeed is highly valued by employers. It shows determination, persistence, and assertiveness. If you are interested in working for a particular business or organization, maintain regular contact with the company by using a variety of methods including a follow up letter, a telephone call, and/or an in-person visit. Many a story has been told of how someone was eventually hired because the employer didn't want to have to turn the person down one more time! Obviously, there is a difference between making your presence known in a respectful, persistent manner, and making a nuisance of yourself, and it's important to know when you are crossing that line. Be the wheel that squeaks just enough to get the grease, not the boot!

They say that opportunities come by knocking on doors until they open. Here's wishing you the strength, the gumption, and the tenacity to keep on knockin' until that door to your next bright opportunity opens before you!

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Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

DVR can help you find the right employee for your business and make the employment process easy and economically beneficial!



Introducing the Cheyenne DVR counselors from left to right: Crystal, Robyn, Shaye and Carl.

The Wyoming State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) works in partnership with people with disabilities and other stakeholders to provide services resulting in employment and equality of individuals with

disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation Division can provide only those services which are necessary for eligible individuals to reach the employment goal agreed to in the Individualized Plan for Employment.

These services may include, but are not limited to:

- Eligibility Assessment
- Counseling and Guidance
- Referral Services
- Job Search and Placement Assistance
- Job Retention and Career Follow-Up
- Vocational and Other Training Services
- Facilitation of diagnosis and treatment of physical/mental impairments
- Transportation Services
- Personal Assistance Services
- Deaf & Blind Interpretive Services
- Rehabilitation Teaching Services
- Occupational Licenses, Tools and Equipment
- Self-Employment Opportunities
- Rehabilitation Technology Services
- Transition Services (from school-to-work)
- Supported Employment Services

To learn more about DVR and eligibility contact your local DVR office at 1510 E. Pershing Blvd or call 307-777-7364 for an appointment with a counselor.



*Festival
of Trees*

Volunteers and Sponsors needed for 2010 Festival of Trees

If you are interested in being a part of the 2010 Festival of Trees, please contact CBLN director, Marla Lewis at 631-8012 or at wbln@vcn.com

You may also become a BLN sponsor, pre-purchase a tree, or make a donation to the BLN. For more information about the CBLN or the Festival of Trees contact the director for details.

Trees, wreathes and other items can be pre-purchased and donated to your favorite organization or family for next year's festival. Orders should be received before August 30th

Welcome to this issue of Ability Link, a monthly newsletter of the Cheyenne Business Leadership Network. The CBLN is an employer led coalition dedicated to empowering employers to become the business of choice for people with disabilities. Each month we provide valuable information to assist your organization to attract more customers and employees with disabilities. Please let us know if there is something you would like to see in a future newsletter. To email your questions or comments, or to remove your name from this mailing list contact: wbln@vcn.com.

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